

San Bernardino, CA
August 4, 1986

Mr. Sam Arnold
c/o Town of Morrison
P. O. Box 95
Morrison, Co. 80465

RE: THE VIEW FROM MT. MORRISON
The Story of a Colorado Town

Dear Mr. Arnold,

I love your book. It tells me more about Morrison than I ever knew in the first place. (What kind of *Swede" sentence is that?) I wish Mrs. Jordan, the town's historian, had sent your book to me long ago. I purchased it on Sunday, July 27, 1986. A copy is also on its way to Montana to my brother, Bruce Maxwell, former resident of Morrison. I was born across from the Pillar of Fire Church (as it is called now), Oct. 4, 1919 in a snow storm. Dr. Luce, who lived where the Mexican restaurant referenced in your book - made his way to the "Jamison house" as it was probably known when you moved to Morrison. That dear old soul helped me into the world. (He was still practicing in 1934 when my family returned to Morrison after living in California many years - old feeble, but still curing!)

[on July 27th,]

Peggy Hahn invited me into the Cliff House as my grandfather, John Swanson was the second owner. I gave her a lot of information about how it was in 1929, and how I recalled what my mother, Helen Keel Swanson said it was when she came as a bride. My father Harry Swanson never knew any other way of life except hotel living.

I can remember the time the CCC camp was built, as well as the amphitheatre in the Red Rocks. We also climbed to the top of 'Creation Rock' thousands of times. Mrs. Durham, an old time resident said the rocks were full of rattlers in the earliest days. In the 30's they were apparently gone. In 1935 a girl named Vida Maxwell and also my brother Bruce Maxwell (not related to Vida) and I climbed to the top of Mt. Falcon to see the "castle". We ate venison sandwiches for lunch. We came down the 'back side' (toward Bear Creek) rather than following the trail. We naturally got lost and did not find our way out until dark. Bear Creek was a welcome sight as all we had to do was follow the stream to get home. It was an all day trek and scary to three young kids, two of whom were fresh from the city of Los Angeles.

The Hillcrest Hotel (page 18) was fashionable in the '30 s and many came from Denver to dance. The big bands who played Elitches and Lakeside enjoyed staying at the Hillcrest. The musicians were like kids as they scampered about the hills and also rode hoseback and came into the café or drug store for cokes. (At one time my parents, Helen and Andrew Maxwell* operated a café - now a liquor store, opposite the B.C. bridge, and the last bldg. in the business district, toward the white rock, which to me reminds of the Rock of Gibraltar, in miniature.)

Pg. 19 - Pearl Fish (formerly Pearl Schrock, then Pearman) took me to the spring on the east side

*step father

Of the Hog Back, by the Soda Lake. Pearl Fish lived by the lake and I loved staying overnight with her and hiking the hog back the next day, or in winter skating on the lake with clamp-on skates. A big bon fire was built by the lake and young and old skated. (One person drowned when swimming. His name was Sims, and this was prior to the time I lived there).

I worked as a hat-check girl at the Hillcrest. Sometimes my mother and I also helped wash dishes if they were short-handed. It was a lovely place. The owners let the Morrison kids swim in the pool. Jack Hogue put his pet beaver in the pool. It scared the you know what out of some lady guests! - The Morrison kids would even swim in the pool as late as Sept. When we had to dive in thru thin ice - then we stopped swimming for the 'summer'.

Chub Pearman and some other boys climbed to the top of Mt. Morrison. It was a slippery/gravelly climb they said. It was in the early 30's and the cog rail [sic] was not in use.

I knew Jake and Nellie Schneider. They were dear little souls. (Alma Schneider, daughter-in-law, later was superintendent of the Denver Mint.) She was our neighbor and lived with husband Dan across the street from us. We were on the corner of what is now known as Park Avenue, which makes me smile. Morrison had a population of 200, counting the dogs when I lived there. I loved the town with all my heart. Everyone knew everybody and loved and cared.

Maggie Crow, who lived on the same road by the Otis & Alberta Pikes drove the stage to the mountains in late 1800's and early 1900's. She carried her revolver by her side. She told me about this. She and son Verne lived in a house that looked like it was finished outside with logs. They later had a silver mine in the high country.

My step-grandfather, Dan Berrien, came thru Morrison in a covered wagon. The Berrien's settled in a valley near Evergreen, and the 3 sons (Ray, George, Dan) owned the whole valley. Berrien Mtn. is named for them.

We used to dance in old mine bldgs. out by the Rooney ranch, at night, on East side of the hogback. It was spooky. My brother Harry Swanson played his violin, as did Ed Groom a blind man, and Percy Aldrich played the guitar. There would be about a dozen young people - only the bravest.

I told Marti Grant and also Peggy Hahn facts I remembered about the Cliff House. I made a tape for Mrs. Grant some years ago, when first I learned that someone was upgrading the hotel. If my Uncle Victor had inherited it in the 1930's I do not think it would have fallen into disrepute.

It lifted my heart on Sunday July 27 to see the young people of today enjoying Morrison and environs in their way, and to recall how we enjoyed and loved it in ours 50 years ago, and to remember how my dear mother told me it was at the turn of the century. Hooray for life!

Respectfully,

Bettie (Swanson) Ries

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